Bogus BPL ration cards in Delhi

2073.SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether large number of persons defraud Food and Supply Department, Delhi and obtain BPL ration cards fraudulently;

(b) if so, the number of persons who have obtained BPL ration cards on the basis of false affidavits and the action taken/ proposed to be taken against such persons;

(c) whether BPL persons are not getting PDS items and if so, the measures taken to ensure that they get PDS items; and

(d) the details of the food items seized during raids conducted in Delhi during the last three years and the action taken against hoarders and officials in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) to (d) It has been reported by the Government of NCT of Delhi that during last one year, verification of ration cards by sorting out and elimination of duplicates and multiple cards through computerization was taken up. During this process, some persons who had been issued BPL cards in their names were not found residing at the addresses given in their food cards/applications. Thus, 8522 BPL cards were eliminated through computerization and 2114 BPL Food cards have been eliminated through verification. The nexus between illegal beneficiaries of bogus/ghost ration cards is being investigated by a separate agency.

BPL cardholders are getting PDS items regularly as per allocation. In case any complaint is received against PDS outlets, strict action is taken for violation of PDS (Control) Order, including lodging of FIR.

In various raids conducted by the Government of NCT of Delhi, following food items were seized during the last three years:-

2006 - Wheat	-	221 Qtls.
2007 - Wheat	-	512 Qtls.
Rice	-	101 Qtls.
2008 - Wheat	-	769 Qtls.
Rice	-	5650 Qtls.

For these malpractices, 14 FIRs have been lodged against the hoarders during the last three years and two officials suspended in 2008.

Corruption in PDS

2074.SHRI JAI PRAKASH NARAYAN SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether the C & A G report on PDS has revealed that 40 per cent of beneficiaries have been kept away from PDS by denying them ration cards and 99 per cent of those who availed the benefits reported that they had not received foodgrains regularly;

(b) whether C & A G's scathing report has brought out the dismal condition of PDS on the heels of a review commissioned by Government which points out that foodgrains for the poor has been siphoned off through more than two crore ghost cards; and

(c) if so, the action taken by the Government to avoid recurrence of such incidents?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) As per CAG report for the year ended March, 2005 [Union Government (Civil) Performance Audit No. 16 of 2006], the number of BPL households accepted by Government for TPDS Allocations (based on 1993-94 poverty estimates of Planning Commission and March 2000 population estimates) was 651.99 lakh, but the States & UTs had issued 861.76 lakh BPL ration cards, which was 32% higher. However, as per Performance Review (Civil) for the year ended 31.3.2006 on Manipur, 37% of respondents in a survey of beneficiary households in Manipur had mentioned about non-issuance of ration cards and 99% of the respondents of the Survey reported that they had not been receiving foodgrains regularly as per the scale prescribed in the scheme.

(b) Under PDS (Control) Order 2001, State & UT Governments are mandated to issue ration cards only to eligible applicants. However, as per record of this Department, State Governments/UT Administrations have reported that about one crore bogus/ineligible ration cards have been deleted/eliminated by them since July, 2006 by implementing 9-point action plan. In view of this, the State Governments and UT Administrations have again been specifically directed to take action against individuals/families who were holding bogus ration cards and officers/staff responsible for issuing such bogus ration cards.

(c) TPDS is operated under the joint responsibility of the Central Government and State Governments. To enable State and UT Governments to implement TPDS properly, Public Distribution (Control) Order, 2001 has been issued by Central Government in August 2001. This order has provisions mandating the State and UT Governments to ensure that only eligible applicants get ration cards and ineligible ration cards as well as units in them are weeded out. To streamline functioning of TPDS, steps taken by Government are of 4 categories:-

(i) For improving functioning of TPDS, display of lists of BPL and AAY families, door step delivery of foodgrains to fair price shops, timely availability of foodgrains at fair price shops, and training of staff as well as vigilance committee members are being emphasized.

(ii) For greater transparency in functioning of TPDS, display of lists of BPL and AAY families at fair price shops, display of allocated quantities on web sites, adoption and implementation of revised Citizens' Charter, monthly certification of delivery of foodgrains to fair price shop and their distribution to ration card holders, and taking up publicity-cum-awareness campaign have been initiated.

(iii) Improved vigilance at various levels and strict penal action against those involved in malpractices, including action against staff responsible for issuing ineligible ration cards and persons found in possession of such ration cards are being emphasized.

(iv) Introduction of new technologies such as Computerization of TPDS operation at various levels, smart-card-based delivery of essential commodities, use of global positioning system on vehicles transporting TPDS commodities and bar coding of ration cards, etc. is being piloted.

Adulteration in rice supplied for school children and PDS

2075.SHRI N.R. GOVINDARAJAR: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether CAG team conducted surprise check and found that the rice which was being provided for school children was adulterated and unfit for human consumption and there is no mechanism in place to check the quality of foodgrains;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to supply fair average qualities (FAQ) of foodgrains for school children as well as for PDS?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (DR. AKHILESH PRASAD SINGH): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. As per Performance Audit Report (No. 13 of 2008) of C&AG, during the surprise visits to the schools of 4 States (Orissa, Punjab, Haryana and Tripura), C&AG's audit team found that rice supplied to some of the schools under Mid-day Meal Scheme in Haryana, Punjab and Orissa was adulterated and unfit for human consumption. Test checks of schools in Orissa, West Bengal and Assam showed that there was no mechanism in place to check the quality and quantity of foodgrains.

(c) The following steps have been taken by the Government to supply Fair Average Quality (FAQ) of foodgrains for school children as well as for PDS:

(i) The Fair Average Quality foodgrains conforming to Prevention of Food Adulteration Act (PFA) Standards are issued for Mid-day Meal Scheme and PDS.

(ii) Adequate opportunities are provided to the officials of the State Governments/UT Administrations to inspect the stocks prior to lifting from the Food Corporation of India (FCI) godowns.

(iii) Instructions had been issued to all the State Governments/UT Administrations that an officer not below the rank of Inspector should be deputed to check the quality of foodgrains before lifting from the FCI godowns.

(iv) The samples of foodgrains are jointly drawn and sealed by the officers of the State Governments/UT Administrations and the FCI from the stocks for display at the counters of Fair Price Shops (FPSs) for the benefit of consumers.